

○ The BELIEF of ^{the}
WITCHCRAFT
VINDICATED:

PROVING,

From SCRIPTURE, there have
been Witches; and from REASON,
that there may be such still.

I N

A N S W E R

To a late Pamphlet, Intituled,

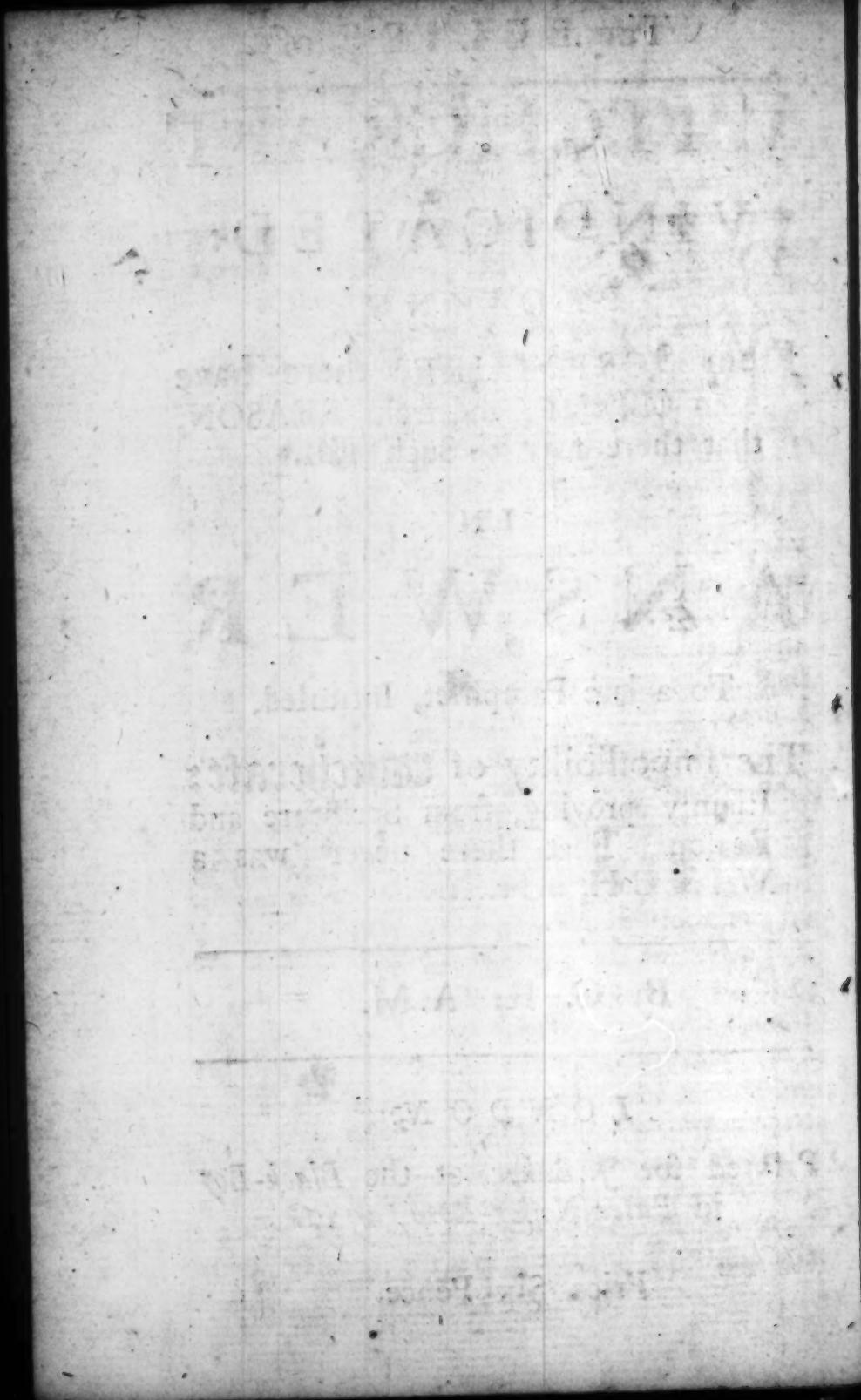
The Impossibility of Witchcraft:
Plainly proving, from Scripture and
Reason, That there never was a
WITCH, &c.

By G. R. A. M.

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The Belief of WITCHCRAFT VINDICATED, &c.

THE late Tryal and Condemnation of *Jane Wenbam* for a Witch, at *Hertford* Assizes, having occasion'd many and various Speculations upon the Subject of *Witchcraft*, and many that I have convers'd with concluding, that there neither is, nor can be any such Thing, I was naturally led into a deeper Search of the Subject, than I had either Leisure or Inclination to allow my self before, and to consider whether such an Opinion, so contrary to that of our Forefathers, and our Laws, so contrary to innumerable Historical Matters of Fact, so contrary to plain Scripture, as we find it in our Translation, be founded upon any Reason that can support so great a Weight, as to over-bear all these several Arguments produceable on the contrary Side of the Question. Accordingly I drew up such Considerations as presently occurr'd, and concluded, as I thought, that I had good Reason to believe that Witchcraft was not only possible, but was very credible; but was resolv'd not to be so prepossess'd, by my own Observations, as not to be always ready to embrace the contrary Opinion, when ever Arguments

should be offer'd, that I could judge strong enough to incline me to such a Change of my Thoughts: When, therefore, such a pompous and assuming Title appear'd in the Advertisements of a Book, as plainly proving from *Scripture and Reason*, that there never was a Witch, and that it is both Irrational and Impious to believe there ever was; together with a *Confutation of the Depositions against Jane Wenham*, I was resolv'd to consider it with all the Coolness and Indifference imaginable, so as to come over to the Author's Side, if I found Reason so to do: Accordingly I perus'd the same, but was so far from being convinc'd of my having before entertain'd false Notions of the Matter, that I thought my self capable of Confuting his Assertions, however otherwise but a Smatterer in Matters of Learning. If the Author, who has the Character, and, for ought I know, justly, of an ingenious Man, has exerted his utmost in that Point, I think the Controversy may soon be brought to an Issue and terminated, and the World fix'd in their Judgment of the Matter; but if he has not, it were to be wish'd he had, that he might have rais'd up an Antagonist more worthy of himself and the Cause, and not have given an Opportunity for Men to look upon our Performances on each Side, as Velitations only to entertain and amuse them till some abler Combatants enter the Lists.

My Reasons for the Possibility and Credibility of Witchcraft I shall have Occasion to insert in my several Answers to the Author, and therefore, not to cloy my Reader with Repetitions, I wave them at present, and fall imme-

immediately to the Consideration of the Book before me.

Our Author, who intimates himself to be the same that writes the *Protestant Post Boy*, undertakes, in his Preface, to answer two Arguments observ'd by some, as it should seem, of his Correspondents in Behalf of Witchcraft: The First is, That *It is a very odd Thing that our Laws impower Judges to put People to Death for Witchcraft, if there is no such Thing as a Witch in the World.* Now, I conceive, the direct Answer to this had been to have shewn, that this is not Matter of Fact; or being so, that the Laws in this Case were misunderstood and misapply'd, but this was too notorious to assert. What then doth he say to the Matter? Why, truly, he owns there are such Laws; and proposes to give us some Account of them: And such a one it is, that is so far from lessening their Reasonableness, the Thing I suppose he aims at, that I think it farther establishes it: It is this in short; There being a Law made, about 400 Years ago, in other Countries, that Hereticks should be burnt, the Inquisitors, who were constituted the Judges of *Heresies*, condemn'd Witches under the Notion of Hereticks, and this in Order, at once, to establish the Usurp'd Dominion of the Pope, and enrich themselves. *Hence very probably other Nations, and particularly England, did afterwards make Laws of the same Tendency, and punish'd Witches in like Manner ever since, till the Statute De Heretico comburendo was repealed.* When this Statute was repeal'd, it seems another was made against Witches, not consider'd as Hereticks, as before, but as

Murderers,

Murderers, 33 H. 8. This Statute, it seems, was repeal'd in the two following Reigns; but *what Motives the succeeding Reigns had to make more severe Laws against them, may be worth Enquiry.* That is, if you can find a Reason you may, but he cannot: What then hath our Author been doing, or how hath he in the least satisfy'd the Objection? Indeed he hath confirm'd it: For if the Matter of Fact be true, that the Laws against Witches, which he supposes made upon the Account of the Religion then prevailing, which was *Popery*, what can we imagine could be the Reason of reviving them in *Protestant Reigns*, after they had been so long repeal'd, but a plain Conviction of the notorious Mischiefs of Witches, and the Necessity of Providing against them by Sanguinary Laws. So that, in short, what our Author hath brought to solve the Objection, is, *First*, a plain Owning the Thing in which the Force of the Objection lay, *to wit*, the Existence of those Laws. *Secondly*, P. 4. Pretence of giving an Account of them, by saying they ought to be accounted for. *And, Thirdly*, by Proceeding so far in the Account, as to make it still very reasonable to conclude there were very good Reasons for their being enacted. This is the first Step our Author hath taken in this Dispute, and I shall leave it to my Reader to judge if it be not an unlucky one; but he will be more surpriz'd, I suppose, when he finds the same unaccountable Vein of Arguing to run thro' his whole Performance. This Argument for Witchcraft is drawn from the Laws in Force against Witches. The next he proposes to answer, is taken from another consequent

consequent Matter of Fact, that Judges have accordingly condemn'd Witches by the Force of such Laws. It runs thus, *The Records of Justice are full of Instances, in all Ages, of the Truth of Witchcraft, which, in their Opinion, amounts to a Demonstration.* Our Author's first Reason why these Records do not amount to a Demonstration, is because, if, according to *Glanvil*, *We are ignorant of the Extents and Bounds of Nature's Sphere and Possibilities, we are uncertain whether those Facts were really done by Witchcraft, or produc'd by the Course of Nature.* I suppose, by amounting to a Demonstration in the Objection, we are to understand a very great Degree of Probability. This Answer then, I say, is of no Weight to invalidate the Credibility of these Facts, because they might be done by the Course of Nature and Witchcraft too, because the Devil may act in Confederacy with a Witch by the meer Force of Nature ; and this I say upon the Strength of our Author's Principle, because *we do not know the Extent of Nature.* The Nature of Spirits, and their Power of acting upon Bodies we know not: But it would be wondrous strange if a poor, ignorant, decripp'd Woman should have penetrated farther into the Nature of Things, than those who have, with the most unweary'd Application, search'd into the Nature and Powers of Matter: Such therefore, when they effect Prodigies above the known Reach of the Learned and Inquisitive, I think it is Demonstration that they do these surprizing Actions by the Help of others; and since they tell us they do them by the Devil's Help, it is highly credible they do so.

2. Ans. *Judges for Interest sake, have suffer'd themselves to be impos'd upon by False Witnesses, and*

so condemned Innocent Persons for things they were never Guilty of ; and can the Records of those Condemnations amount to a Demonstration ? I Reply, No. But is there any Instance upon Record, that Judges have received Bribes in the Tryals of Witches, and have thereby been impos'd upon by False Witnesse, to the Condemnation of such ? If not, what is this Answer to the purpose ?

3. *Ans. Judges have Condemn'd Innocent Persons, for Facts that were Impossible to be done. But doth it hence follow, That Persons that have been Condemn'd for Facts possible to be done, were Condemn'd unjustly ? For that the strange appearances in Witchcraft are possible, I must believe, because I find the Devil, who is the chief Agent, allow'd to do as strange Things in Scripture : For instance, I cannot but imagine it as possible for the Devil to enable *Ann Thorn* to leap over a Five-Bar Gate, as it was to set our Saviour on a Pinacle of the Temple : In short, I find no appearances in Witchcraft more strange, than what is Recorded of the *Demoniack, Mark, 5. 45.* Of whom it is said, *That he had been often bound with Fetters and Chains, and the Chains had been plucked asunder by him, and the Fetters broken in pieces : Neither could any Man tame him. And always, Night and Day, he was in the Mountains, and in the Tombs, crying and cutting himself with Stones.* Perhaps the Position would be difficult to be made out, *That an Innocent Man was ever Condemn'd of a Fact Impossible in its own Nature, and to speak of any other Impossible Fact could surely make but little to the Purpose.**

4. *Ans. Judges have Condemn'd many Innocent Persons upon the Testimony of pretended Witch-finders*

finders, who being Authoriz'd, &c. I Answer, I question the Truth of the History, that any were ever Condemned purely upon the Testimony of Witch-finders, without any other Inducements for the same. But supposing the Account True; must One or more Instances of, perhaps, Unwarantable Proceedings, make us conclude, that a Thousand other Instances, unattended with such indefensible Circumstances, may not be worthy of the highest Credit? Doth a particular Exception prove, that a Rule is not generally True?

5. Ans. *The Judges themselves are not Infallible, and may, perhaps, have Erroneous Notions of these Dark and Abstruse Matters, and Condemn Witches wrongfully.* It is possible; but doth it follow, therefore, that they are Mistaken? They are not Infallible it is true; but for all that, since there are so many Instances of the Condemnation of Witches; so many Accounts of Diabolical Facts, attested by the Oaths of unexceptionable Witnesses, I must needs think that it is so highly probable there have been Witches, and consequently are so, because it is all the Demonstration the Nature of the Thing is capable of: And therefore, passing by his Instances of the Antipodes, as much against him, as for him; as fully shewing, that People may possibly be generally Mistaken; (nor can I subscribe to his Opinion, when he says, *It is more Obvious and Intelligible than those Impossible Instances of Witchcraft, for which 2000 poor Souls have been Condemned;* for it was neither Obvious, nor Intelligible, till Experience confirm'd the Truth of it; nor are the Instances of Witchcraft Impossible, but Confirm'd nearer Home by

equal Ocular Demonstration) passing by this therefore, I proceed to his Confutation of the Depositions against Jane Wenham. This indeed he promis'd in the Title Page, but hath thought fit to drop it. He tells us, *He should enter into the Merits of the several Depositions, which are Sixteen in number, but out of respect to the Sacred Habit which Two of them wear, and the Incapacities of the other Fourteen, he dismisses them to their respective Bed-Chambers, with no farther Remarks, than that the Inconsistencies which they are guilty of, shew they very much stand in need of Rest, since a Crazy Body very often indisposes the Soul, and influences the Mind to entertain strange and preternatural Ideas of Things that have no manner of Existence.* His Consideration of the Clergy, I own is very commendable; but I think the clearing of Truth ought to be above all others: Besides, he might have managed the Matter so, as to have shewn their Mistakes, without breaking in upon the Respect due to the Order. But what could all his Enquiries have done more to the Exposing these Gentlemen, than what he insinuates of the Contradictions in the *Depositions*, and their being under a Disorder of Brain, that made them. But is it so? Why doth he not produce one Instance of Inconsistency? It is strange, if this be True, that the Court should Condemn the Woman upon the Evidence of Mad-Men, that was Inconsistently too. Besides, is it not most admirable, that so many Crazed, Melancholy, Mad-People, should combine so unanimously in the Destruction of an Old Woman, and be so uniform in such a variety of Evidence, as to obtain her Condemnation? This sufficiently clears them of the Imputation of

of Madness; and as for their Honesty, since I find it not attaced, I have no occasion to suppose it questionable.

So much for the Preface. Come we now to the Book itself; which consisting partly of *Harangues*, partly of *Arguments*, and the former being of no Consideration, but as they are supported by *these*, I shall set my self professedly to consider *these* only, as being only material to the Point. His first Thing that looks like Argument, is, an Answer to an Objection that may be rais'd from the present Translation of the Bible, which he tells us is False, in relation to Witches, and the like; What he says on this Head, I shall Consider, when we come to the Article, *Whether there be any such Thing as a Witch in Scripture*. He proposes then, page 6, to manage the Subject in this manner. 1. To prove, *That this strange Notion of Witchcraft has its Foundation in Heathen Fables*. 2. *That it was Improv'd by Papal Inquisitors, for the sake of Private Interest*. 3. To prove, *That there is no such Thing as a Witch in Scripture*. 4. To make appear, *That there is no such Thing as a Witch at all; and produce several Arguments against the Affirmers of Witchcraft*. 5. *To Answer other Arguments to the Contrary*. And 6. and *Lastly*, *To shew by what Means this Opinion of Witchcraft came into the World*.

Our Author's first Particular is to prove, *That this strange Notion of Witchcraft has its Foundation in Heathen Fables*. That Witchcraft was practised first among the Heathens, I shall readily grant, because the Scripture assured us of the same; this being one of the Causes which God himself gives for his Driving out the Inhabitants

tants of Canaan before the Children of *Israel*, *Deut.* 18. 9, 10, 11, 12. But our Author deduces this Opinion from the *Grecian* and *Roman* Fables ; and it were sufficient to answer this Assertion, by saying at present, what I shall hereafter, I believe, make out, that this Belief of ours hath its Foundation in Scripture, and that we do not believe the Heathens because the Heathens did. However, that the Author may not think himself neglected, I shall say something particularly to this Head. He tells us this Belief arose from the vain Credulity of Men in the Heathen Ages, but hath not one Word to shew that this was meer Credulity, and not an Opinion grounded on Matter of Fact. He divides his Heathen Impostors into two Classes, those that were called *Sage*, for being famous for Prophesying Things to come ; and *Venefica*, or *Lamia*, who did wonderful Exploits. Now, that the *Sage* did not foretell strange Things above the Sagacity of Man to foresee, he hath not a Word to prove ; however, to our Purpose, I urge, that there were Women inspir'd by the Devil, Witness the Priestesses of *Delphos*, whose Oracles were so famous, and in Request so long Time in the most learned and judicious Parts of the Heathen World, the Truth of many of whose Predictions if any doubt, yet, I think, none ought to question that they were inspir'd, and acted by evil Spirits, or *Damons* ; if any do, I refer them to be satisfy'd by a Book, entituled, *An Essay on Inspirations*, publish'd within these few Years. And it were to be wish'd the Judicious and Sagacious Author would be prevail'd upon to give us his Thoughts on this Subject, and thereby put an entire End to the Dispute. His

His next Sort of Heathen Witches were the *Lamia*, or *Venefice*; these, he says, among other Things, were notorious for Killing of Children by Herbs, which were suppos'd to have strange Kind of Virtues in them. Now I would ask whether they did *really* kill Children, and play other mad Pranks; if they did, and in such an unaccountable Manner, as therefore to be esteem'd Witches, as our Author says nothing to the contrary, then, as these Herbs could have no such Virtues in themselves, they must do it by no less powerful Assistants than *Demons*, tho', perhaps, not believ'd to do so by the rest of the World. It doth not, therefore, appear that our Notions of Witchcraft were deliver'd down to us from Heathen Fables; but granting they were, may it not fairly be answer'd, That the Christians took up their Opinions, not because the Heathens talk'd so fantastically, but because Matter of Fact perswaded them into the Belief, that there was something at the Bottom of those Fables, and which they should have believ'd, had there been no such Fables at all? And, after all, who doth not know that many Truths, as well Natural as Historical, were couch'd under the Mythology of the Heathens: So that this first Particular I think by no means made out. As for the *Fucubi* and *Succubi*, tho' it make much to our Purpose, if there were such, but nothing against us, if there were not, yet shall I not trouble my self about them any farther, than to transcribe Mr. Milton's Account of the Matter.

*With these came they, who from the bord'ring Flood
Of Old Euphrates to the Brook that parts*

Egypt

Egypt from Syrian Ground, had general Names
 Of Baalim and Ashtaroth, those Male
 Those Feminine. For Spirits, when they please,
 Can either Sex assume, or both; so loft
 And uncompounded is their Essence pure,
 Not ty'd or manacled with Joint or Limb,
 Nor founded on the brittle Strength of Bones,
 Like cumbrous Flesh; but in what Shape they chuse,
 Dilated or condens'd, bright or obscure,
 Can execute their airy Purposes,
 And Works of Love and Enmity fulfil.

Parad. Lost. B. I.

Our Author's next Business is to shew, That this Notion of Witchcraft, as taken from the Heathens, has been improv'd by *Papal Inquisitors*, for the sake of private Interest: And here he enlarges upon what he had before said in the Preface, which being answer'd already, little more needs to be said now. He tells us, the *Monks* and *Fryars* being entrusted, by the *Popes*, with the Power of Trying Hereticks, twisted and blended Witchcraft with the Crime of Heresy, and in Tormenting and putting People upon that Pretence to Death, they at once gratify'd the Ambition and usurp'd Power of their Lord the *Pope*, and their own insatiable Covetousness and Thirst after other Men's Goods. Now, as the Laws in *England* can have no such Designs as gratifying the *Pope* or his *Inquisitors*, this can signify nothing to us of *England*. I observe farther, that it is strange these avaritious *Inquisitors* should punish Witches for the sake of enriching themselves, when he himself assures us, the modern Witches, in Opposition to those of Scripture, are poor, silly, contemptible People, and draws

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an Argument against Witchcraft, from the miserable Poverty of our vulgarly reputed Witches: And then, as for the Establishing the Pope's Authority, how would it be serviceable to this End, except they really thought these were Witches; and if they did really esteem them such upon Tryal, this I must think no Argument against, but a good one for our Side of the Question: So that our Author's Account for the Belief of Witches in Christian Countries is not very credible; and, if true, proves nothing to the Purpose: For, supposing the Reasons Scandalous which induc'd them to punish Witches, can it thence be any Ways inferred, that there are really none such? The Hereticks were burnt in the same manner, and upon the same Account: But could it ever enter into the Head of any Man to draw an Inference from hence, that there never were any such People really, as Hereticks in the Popish Sense of the Word? And, after all, it will be a full Answere still, tho' I think there needs none to the foremention'd Particulars, if the Christian Belief of Witches appears to be fairly deduc'd from Scripture; which I promise my self I shall be able to do in my Answere to the Author's three Particulars, which was to prove, *That there is no such Thing as a Witch in Scripture.*

His First Argument is taken from the difference between our Vulgarly reputed Witches, and those which our Translators of the Bible call so. These were Kings, and Queens, and Princes of the Earth, as also the Priests and Philosophers, and Wise Men of this World. Whereas the Witches, now-a-days, are poor, silly, contemptible People, &c. Of his Kings and

and Queens, I find *Manasses* and *Jezebel* to have been mention'd as such: Of the former it is said, *That He used Enchantments, and dealt with familiar Spirits, and Wizards*, but that he was one himself, is not so very clear; and of *Jezebel*, I find, that *Jehu* objected her Witchcraft to her Son *Joram*; but here, perhaps, the Word is to be understood Figuratively, to signify her enticing People to Idolatry: By the others, I suppose, our Author means the Magicians of *Egypt*, in the times of *Joseph* and *Moses*, and those of *Babylon*, mention'd by *Daniel*; now, granting the Observation true, I cannot see any force in the Argument. For may not the Great and Learned Men of the World have had Commerce with the Devil formerly, in Times of Idolatry and Ignorance, and yet the Devil be able to Seduce none but poor ignorant People now under the Gospel Light? Again, how is our Author sure that none but the poor and contemptible People have, if any, any Commerce with the Devil now? Must all such presently be discover'd? Those that are so, are discover'd by means of Venting their Passions in so violent and publick a Manner upon those, by whom they have been disobligr'd; whereas, People of Fashion, and in better Circumstances, may entertain such a Commerce upon other Motives besides Revenge, and who may be wise enough to do it, without making such a Use of it, as to discover their Practices, and lay themselves open to the Law. Again, there may be *Witches*, or *Wizards*, in other Countries that may be esteem'd the Wise-Men of their Nations, where Idolatry prevails, however not with us; History also tells us of several *Popes*

Popes themselves, who were both Princes and Priests, who were actually Magicians or Sorcerers. Besides, are none but Princes and Wise Men mention'd as Witches in Scripture? What must we think of the of *Endor*? What of all those that *Saul* put out of the Land? These we may believe were no more Priests and Philosophers, than the other a Queen. So that the first Argument against Scripture Witches is, I think, fully answer'd: Come we then to his

Second Argument, which is drawn from the *Sadduces*; a famous Sect among the Jews, who deny'd Spirits, and the Resurrection of the Dead yet had the Five Books of Moses in high Esteem and Regard; wherefore, either they did not understand Hebrew, or if they did, the Notion of Witchcraft did not appear in Moses. By the same Argument I prove there is no Angels. The *Sadduces* deny'd the being of Angels; now, either the *Sadduces* did not understand Hebrew, or the Notion of Angels did not appear in *Moses*. What shall we say then, that there is no Account of Angels in *Moses*? Or shall we not say, that the *Sadduces* were a wilfull, obstinate People, wedded to their own Prejudices, in spite of Reason and Religion, that did not, or would not understand *Moses*; however, they pretended to the World, that they had a great Veneration for him. Our Author must surely be much in Want of Proofs, or had a very mean Opinion of his Readers, who could produce this for Reason, or think it would pass upon them for such.

His Third and Last Argument is taken from the different Practices ascrib'd unto our vul-

garly suppos'd Witches, and unto those in our Translation of the Bible. Our modern Witches practice a secret Occult Art, and it requires great Skill to discover them by several strange Signs, and horrid Tortures. But those whom our Translators call Witches, were such as practis'd what they did, openly, and in the Face of the World, making publick Profession of their Art, which was the Counterfeit Art of Propheſyng and Working of Miracles. To this I answer, That it is very improbable, nay incredible, what our Author here urges should be true, because, whatever it was, it was punishable by Death, and therefore, to be sure not practis'd in so open a manner as he here suggests; can it be imagin'd, that any one would make a publick Profession, in the Face of the World, of an Art for which he knew he must forfeit his Life? Believe it who can. But this he, our Author, thinks confirm'd by Saul's putting the Witches out of the Land so easily, whereas a Proclamation would hardly be able to do the same by ours. The former Answer will serve us here again, that since the Crime was punishable with Death, they would certainly make the Business of Discovery as difficult as possible. And as for our own Witches, if the Discovery be so difficult, how comes it to pass that so many have suffer'd upon this Account, after full Conviction? That the Witches among the Jews were suffer'd to kill People, I do not affirm; the Question is, and that which entitles them to be call'd in English, WITCHES, whether they had a Commerce with the Devil, and acted by Virtue of that Confederacy? Nor is the Discovery of those among us, who Practise upon others by Diseases, so very difficult,

cult, since they seem not to be empower'd to torment any but Children, if them, without discovering themselves. What Means *Saul* had of Discovering the Witches in his Time, I know not; but were a Proclamation publish'd, That all that should give an Account of suspected Witches, should, upon Conviction of such, be rewarded with a considerable Sum, I believe our Author would find the Discovery of Witches among us an easier Task than he imagines. When *Saul* cut off the Witches in his Days, it is plain there were still Means for some to remain undiscover'd, Witness her of *Endor*, and how many more might do so, we know not. So that, for this Reason, it appears not to have been so easy a Matter to discover Scripture Witches as our Author fancies: So that I must needs think this Argument of his a very frivolous one; and thus have I answer'd his three Arguments against the being of Witches in Scripture, weaker than which, were surely, never produc'd in any Cause of Moment, and yet upon this Point the main Weight of the Dispute depends, and which therefore requir'd the strongest Attack; his Busines was to prove there was no Witch in Scripture; which, I think, he has by no means done; I shall prove the Affirmative, that there is; and that I shall do by considering what he says of those Words, which he finds Fault with in the present Translation, and which, for Method's sake, I referr'd to be spoke to in this Place.

He tells us, what our Translation renders *Enchanter*, ought to be *Conjecturer*; and a *Witch*, a *Miracle Monger*, or *Impostor*; such, for Instance, as Queen *Jezabel*, and King *Manasses*,

whom our Author fancies to have been *Juglers*: Such were the *Magicians*, that withstood *Moses* and *Aaron*. The Word *Ob*, which, in my Dictionary, is render'd a Devil, or Evil Spirit, he says, *Signifies sometimes the Gift of Oracling, and sometimes the Person that hath such a Gift*; it signifies, also, a *Bottle* or *Hollow Vessel*, and from this *Signification* he supposes the other came; by which we come to understand that the *Oracle of the Bottle* was not the Invention of a Modern Wit. We are let, it seems, into these Truths by the Translation of *Junicus* and *Tremellius* and the old Translator; but, by our Author's leave, I shall take the Liberty of supposing, that our Translators understood *Hebrew* as well as *Junius* and *Tremellius*, and, consequently, for all his learned Performance, persist to think, our Countrymen have, with equal Judgment and Faithfulness, render'd the Text accurately in reference to *Witches*, *Inchanter*s, and *Familiar Spirits*. Here, indeed, is a fair occasion offered of Displaying my profound skill in the Oriental Languages; but I wave it, because I think I can sufficiently prove the Sence of Scripture from Scripture it self. Our Business at present, as I apprehend, is to shew, that there is in Scripture mention made of such, who haye had an actual Commerce with the Devil, in order, by his Assistance, to perform strange and surprizing Things, whether they are called *Conjurers*, *Enchanter*s, *Sorcerers*, *Witches*, or whatever Titles else they are distinguished by; and if there appear really to be any such, Our Translation, I suppose, is sufficiently vindicated, as well as the Belief of Witchcraft from Scripture. And the First Instance

Instance I shall consider, is the Case of the Magicians of *Ægypt*, that opposed *Moses* and *Aaron*. The Historical matter of Fact, as we find it recorded, *Exod.* 7. 10, 11, 12, is this, *And Moses and Aaron went in unto Pharoah, and they did so as the Lord Commanded; and Aaron cast down his Rod before Pharoah, and before his Servants, and it became a Serpent. Then Pharoah also called the Wise Men, and the Sorcerers, now the Magicians of Egypt, they also did in like manner with their Inchantments. For they cast down every Man his Rod, and they became Serpents: But Aaron's Rod swallowed up their Rods.* These Magicians our Author calls *Miracle Mongers*: *Nor let any one think, saith he, that, for the Performance of these Counterfeit Miracles, they stood in need of the Devil's Assistance; for what they perform'd, either exceeded not the Compass of Human Art, altho' Miraculous in the Eyes of the Vulgar; or if it did, then it was not really perform'd, but a mere Jugling Imposture.* Such kind of Juglers were those who stood before Pharoah, *in Opposition to Moses and Aaron.*

What I shall first observe here, is this Author's new Method of Arguing; if these Miracles which they perform'd, exceeded the compass of Human Art, then they were not really perform'd; so that I find it may so happen that a thing that is perform'd, may not *really* be perform'd; this it is to be Sagacious. But to our Author's meaning, which I suppose is, that they did not really perform what they seem'd to perform; their turning of Rods into Serpents was a mere Delusion: But I say the Scripture informs us otherwise, which affirms, the Magicians did what *Aaron* did, they cast down

down their Rods, and those Rods became Serpents, that is, they seem'd to be Serpents; according to this Gentleman's Gloss, he may, if he pleases take this Liberty of Interpreting Scripture; but I cannot think any reasonable Reader will give into his Opinion; I am sure if they do, they must own, that the Metamorphosis of *Aaron's* Rod was equally Delusion; and I think such People had better give up the Scriptures at once, as one intire Imposition, than thus to Banter them away by Piece-Meal. But to Magicians; what they perform'd it seems was a Delusion; if so, I suppose this Delusion must be perform'd by having Serpents ready at Hand, which should appear at the Casting down of their Rods, which Rods should be invisibly convey'd away by Slight of Hand, or else they cast such a mist before the Spectators Eyes, as to make them think the Rods were Serpents, when they were not. Now this last could not be the Case of the Magicians, because it is said, that *Aaron's* Rod swallow'd up theirs; which could not be, if their Rods now become Serpents, were really nothing but an Imaginary appearance: And for the Rods of the Magicians being convey'd away and Serpents put in their places, this is equally contradictory to the History, which says, that *Aaron's* Rod swallow'd up their Rods, which would be false, if their Rods were gone and Serpents left in their Places. We must then, if we believe *Moses*, believe that the Magicians Rods were really turn'd into Serpents. What shall we say then, that this Miracle was perform'd by the Power of the Devil? I shall not assert it, because I must needs think, that God never

never Impowered the Devil to perform a real Miracle ; that is, what is above or contrary to the stated Course of Nature, as this certainly was. There nothing then remains, but that it was done by the Power of God. The Solution of this matter hath given much trouble to Divines, and our Author hath justly expos'd that of St. *Augustines* : To me the Difficulty seems inextricable, except we allow, that the Magicians attempting this, through the Confidence they had in those Dæmons, they had an intercourse with, it pleas'd God to let their Expectations of performing what *Aaron* did ; he answered in this, and the two following Miracles, to this end, that when the Power, they thought these Miracles perform'd by, was found to be able to assist them no longer, they might own, as they really did, that the God, in whose name *Moses* and *Aaron* came, was Superior to him or them, with whom they had intercourse ; for that it was not a meer Delusion but actually done, the two following Miracles evince. For when *Aaron* stroke the Waters of *Ægypt*, and they turn'd into Blood, it is said, that the *Magicians of Egypt* did so with their *Inchantments*. And where should they have procur'd Blood enough to have perform'd this by Jugling ? Or who should inform them, before hand, that this would be the next Miracle perform'd ? None, surely, but the Devil, and to own this, were to give up the Cause directly. Now, that the Magicians had an intercourse with Dæmons, of whom they had not those Accounts we have, we may fairly infer, because it is wholly unaccountable to Imagine, that they could think themselves capable of performing such strange Actions by the Power

of Art: Could it ever come into any Man's Head to think he could do, what all the Powers of Nature will never be able to do, and this at a Minutes Warning, to wit, of turning a stick into a living Organical Creature? But it is very Natural to suppose they might hope to do this by the Help of the Devil, whom they esteem a God, for they knowing no difference between the True God and Devils, might very well suppose, that what they saw *Aaron* do, in the Name, and by the Assistance of his God, they might do by the Assistance of theirs, whom they had no occasion, as yet, to Imagine less Powerful than the other, with less Confidence than this they could never surely have attempted to have rival'd the Miracles of *Aaron*, before such a Company as the King and all his Court; when, if they had fail'd, it had prov'd no less the Confusion of the King than themselves. For these Reasons I must conclude the Magicians had a Commerce with the Devil, tho' I do not allow their Miracles to be perform'd by his Power.

The Next Instance of Diabolical Commerce in Scripture I shall mention, is the History of the Witch of *Endor*, as related 1. *Sam.* 28. Here we are inform'd, that *Samuel* was Dead, and the Philistines invaded the Land, and *Saul* seeing their Armies was afraid, and his Heart greatly trembled; and what added to his Confusion was, that seeking Counsel of God, he was Answered neither by Dreams, nor by Urim, nor by Prophets. *Saul* who before had put out all those that had Familiar Spirits, and the Wizards out of the Land was in such a Consternation, that now he enquires after one himself

himself, and takes up the Resolution of the Goddess in the Poet.

Fledere si nequeo Superos, Acheronta movebo.

If God will not receive me, I'll try the Devil.

Accordingly, having Information of one that had a Familiar Spirit at *Endor*, he applies himself to her in disguise. Our Author's Account of those, that had Familiar Spirits, is, that they were *Juglers*, pretending to *Oracles*, delivered from a Bottle, or through a hallow Vessel. Now, in answer to this, it must be presum'd, that *Saul* understood the Common Sense of the *Jews* in reference to those that had Familiar Spirits, and that by his Expectations is plainly enough discovered: What he desir'd of this Witch of *Endor* was; that *she would divine by the Familiar Spirit, and bring him up whom He should name unto Her*. Is it possible to Imagine that *Saul* believ'd this Woman a *Jugler*, or a Counterfeit deliverer of *Oracles*, and not one that could, by the Help of her *Familiar Spirit*, bring up the Ghost of whom she pleas'd, the Devil at least in his Appearance. Hence we may fairly infer, that the Sense of the *Jews* was, that one that had a *Familiar Spirit*, had actually a Commerce with a Devil or Evil Spirit; And the Process of the Story confirms this farther. *Saul* having Swore to her, not to betray her, she falls to work, and as he requested endeavours to raise up *Samuel* or rather his likeness: As yet she knows not *Saul*, but no sooner doth the Spirit approach but she is under strange apprehensions, she cries out with a loud voice, she finds it is *Saul* himself that Consults her. But how comes she to know him now, and not before? By the Help of her

Confederate Jugler? If such a Person there was that knew him, how comes he to discover him no sooner? This seems therefore the information of an Infernal Familiar. For how could *Samuel's* approach give her such a Light? Might not any other employ'd by *Saul* call for *Samuel*, as well as himself; or why then did she not discover him at the first mention of *Samuel's* Name? It is plain she was disappointed. She expected, very probably, her Familiar or some other Dæmon in *Samuel's* shape, and finds I conceive, it is *Samuel* himself that rises, as the rest of the Story plainly, I think, shews. Now, if all this was only Jugling and Counterfeit, if 'twas only a Confederate of the Witch that assum'd the Shape of *Samuel*, how comes he so exactly to foretell his Death the Next Day? A Counterfeit would have been rather apt to have sooth'd the King, and given him a pleasing Answer; nay, it is said, that *Saul* perceived that it was *Samuel*; and his after Behaviour manifests, that the Prophet's Words, had left a strong impression behind them: So, that upon the whole, I must conclude, that it was the Sense of the Jewish Nation, that by those that had Familiar Spirits were to be understood such as had an Actual Commerce with the Devil; and the History of this Woman confirms that Notion to be true; as the same might be made appear very probable from the Story of *Balaam*; but this I suppose Sufficient. And now I think we have reason enough to be believe, that we understand the Meaning of Witches in Scripture, and that they were such, as our Native Language means by the Word.

Our Author comes now to his 4. Particular, which

which is to prove there is no such Thing as a Witch at all. He tells us, he hath Vanity enough to think, he hath prov'd there is no such thing as a Witch in Scripture, (and I must confess I think it is vanity to do so) and his Deduction is, That if there is such a Thing, it ought to have been mention'd there; and this is his 1. Argument against Witchcraft in General. To which I Answer, I have also the vanity to think, I have Prov'd there is such a Thing as a Witch mention'd in Scripture, and Consequently I have thereby Answered this Argument. However, supposing this not done, and that there was no such thing mentioned in the Sacred Writings, yet his Reasonings on this Point will receive an easy Answer. His main busines, in this place, is to Answer an Objection, That Silence in Scripture is no Argument against the Truth of a Thing, because many Things are true, that are not mention'd there. What he says to this, is, That a Matter of so great Moment, as the Discovery of a Witch ought not to have been pass'd over in Silence, when there is so great Care taken to discover those that offend in less heinous Matters: As for Instance, Adultery. As for what he says of the Severity of the Laws against Incestuous Concubinage, meddling with strange Women, Uncleanness, and Oppression, I say, if the Appearances of Witchcraft have any thing more Sinful, they are, however, forbid in Witchcraft and Sorcery, and the Punishment as much for a Witch as any other Crime: But I forget, we are at present supposing no Witch to be mention'd in Scripture; but still variety of Answers may be given to this Objection if it had really a true

Foundation. First, These Laws have relation only to the *Jews*, so that, upon the Supposition, there were no *Witches* among the *Jews*, as they were God's peculiar People, and not expos'd to so strong Temptations of the Devil; then it can be no wonder there was no Law made against such Criminals, which should never be found among them: But here an Objection offers it-self: If there were Witches among them, how come the Tryal of them to be omitted? To which I answer, there could be no Occasion of it, since those Facts that discover'd them to be such, must of it self be sufficient Evidence, and the Law was plain: Upon such Conviction they should be Stoned to Death. I esteem Murder a greater Crime than Adultery, and yet there was no miraculous Tryal appointed for this. *Naboth* was Condemn'd for Blaspheming God and the King, by the Force of False Witnesses; but no means left to clear his Innocence, by means of a Supernatural Tryal. False Witnesses, no doubt, against a Man's Life, was as great a Matter as Adultery, and yet I do not remember of any extraordinary Method prescrib'd, for the Detecting such, by wondrous Means; and therefore, for these and some other Reasons, I must needs think, that tho' Adultery was made discoverable by a strange (I shall not say with our Author Horrible) Tryal, yet it doth not follow, that nothing of equal or greater Moment is true, because not thus miraculously discoverable: And therefore Witchcraft, if it were not, as it certainly is mentioned in Scripture, might yet be true. The

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reputed *Witches*. To this I answer, This is not Universally true ; some Instances there are of *Witches* that have been unaccountably supply'd with abundance of *Necessaries*, who had no visible means of procuring them : And as for those that are not, we may answer, The Devil cannot go beyond his Commission ; he may be permitted to be Instrumental in the Revenge of his Malicious Confederates, and yet not be permitted to relieve them in the *Necessaries of Life*. His

3. Argument against *Witches*, *That it is either Irrational, or Impious* ; Irrational, to think that the *Devils* are *Creatures full of Malice, and breathing nothing but Mischief against the whole Race of Man, and that they suffer a Man to Live, when they can so easily kill us at the Command of a Witch*. This he answers himself : But, if you evade this, by saying, *That Devils cannot hurt us without the Divine Permission* ; then, I say, 'tis *Impious to concern the great God with Witchcraft*. But, as he knew the Answer to this was obvious, he suggests it himself. 'Tis true indeed, *he may send Death and Diseases amongst the Sons of Men, to punish them for their Sins at his own Pleasure*. But, then the Difference, it seems, is, *that he should do so at the Desire of the Devil, at the Command of a Witch, is such a Gratification of Malice, as is far from God to perform* : So that the Argument is come to this, *That it is Impious to say, the Devil can hurt us by Divine Permission* : I answer, it is no more so, than it is to say, a Murderer can kill us by Divine Permission ; and the Argument is as strong to prove the Nonentity of, and as full against Murder as Witchcraft ; the Devil is an Instigator in the one Case, and the direct Instrument in the other ; and it is

Foundation. First, These Laws have relation only to the *Jews*, so that, upon the Supposition, there were no *Witches* among the *Jews*, as they were God's peculiar People, and not expos'd to so strong Temptations of the Devil; then it can be no wonder there was no Law made against such Criminals, which should never be found among them: But here an Objection offers it-self: If there were Witches among them, how come the Tryal of them to be omitted? To which I answer, there could be no Occasion of it, since those Facts that discover'd them to be such, must of it self be sufficient Evidence, and the Law was plain: Upon such Conviction they should be Stoned to Death. I esteem Murder a greater Crime than Adultery, and yet there was no miraculous Tryal appointed for this. *Naboth* was Condemn'd for Blaspheming God and the King, by the Force of False Witnesses; but no means left to clear his Innocence, by means of a Supernatural Tryal. False Witnesses, no doubt, against a Man's Life, was as great a Matter as Adultery, and yet I do not remember of any extraordinary Method prescrib'd, for the Detecting such, by wondrous Means; and therefore, for these and some other Reasons, I must needs think, that tho' Adultery was made discoverable by a strange (I shall not say with our Author Horrible) Tryal, yet it doth not follow, that nothing of equal or greater Moment is true, because not thus miraculously discoverable: And therefore Witchcraft, if it were not, as it certainly is mentioned in Scripture, might yet be true. The

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is equally impious to assert, There ever was a Murderer, as a Witch: And when our Author, or any other, shall demonstrate, by this, or any other Argument, that there never was a Murderer, I promise readily to own there never was a Witch. As for the Gratification of the Devils or Witches, God gives not the Permission with any such View: He uses their Malice, as he doth all other Wickedness, to very wise Purposes of his own. For, I pray, doth God permit one Man to Murder another, in Complaisance to the Person, and to gratify him in his revengeful Humour? But the Author not minding such parallel Cases, which must, at first View, have shew'd the Weakness of such Reasoning, foresaw an Objection that would be equally destructive of his Position, *to wit*, the Instance of *Satan* and *Job*; and by Way of Answer informs us, That *Calvin*, in his Sermons on the two first Chapters of *Job*, takes a great deal of Pains to explode this Opinion of God's Permission. So that the Irrationality and Impiety of Witchcraft is at last found to have no other Support but Mr. *Calvin*'s Exposition of *Job*; and consequently, to his darling Doctrine of Absolute Predestination, his denying the Actions of Men, or Devils by God's Permission. But doth our Author believe *Calvin*, or not? If he doth, then he gives into the Opinion, that God is the Author of Sin, which he must be, if Men do sinful Actions not by his Permission, but absolute determinate Decree: And then the Argument will run thus; 'Tis Impious to concern the Great God with Witchcraft. Why so? Because it is to make God gratify the Devil: Well, but he gratify'd the Devil in the Case

Case of *Job*. No, he gratify'd himself; for what the Devil did, was but God's absolute Appointment: So that the Reasons why the Affirming of Witchcraft is impious, is because God never permits any Thing, but acts every Thing directly and positively himself. But, may there not be Witchcraft for all that? Yes, certainly, and therefore this is having Recourse to an Absurdity for Shelter, which, if granted, yields none. Besides, this, if granted, solves all the strange Appearances and Difficulties of Witchcraft at once, this Opinion makes God the Actor, and consequently, sets an Author before our Eyes capable of Exhibiting much stranger Things still. If this Gentleman does not believe *Calvin*, (as I cannot suppose he will be willing to be thought capable of Falling in with the innumerable Absurdities of *Absolute Predestination*) why then the Matter is worse still; he answers an Instance in Scripture that directly overthrows the Position advanc'd by him, by such Allegations which he himself doth not believe; so that let him, or the Reader, chuse which they will, it no ways appears that the Belief of *Witchcraft* is either *Irrational* or *Impious*. Now, whether we survey the Devil as a necessary Instrument, or voluntary Agent, acting at Liberty within his Sphere, for it is all one, as to the Matter of Witchcraft: We shall consider whether the wonderful Occurrences in *Witchcraft* do not appear possible, from as wonderful Occurrences perform'd by his Intervention in Scripture; and here, in the Case of *Job*, we find that he was enabled to despoil this good Man of his Oxen and Asses, by the means of the

the *Sabeans*, who took them away, and slew his Servants with the Edge of the Sword: By his Instigation the *Chaldeans* carried away his Camels, and slew the Servants that attended them: By his means the Fire of God, or, as it is in the Margin, a great Fire fell from Heaven, and burn'd up his Sheep, and the Servants that kept them: By his means a great Wind from the Wilderness smote the four Corners of the House, and threw it down upon his seven Sons and three Daughters that were there Feasting, and destroy'd them all: And, lastly, he smote *Job* himself with sore Boils from the Sole of his Foot unto his Crown. In the *New Testament* we find a large Account of those that were possess'd of Evil Spirits, many of them were at once in the Man quoted before, whom they render'd unconfinable by any Chains, untameable by Men, and how they made him misuse and torture his own Body, I need not again repeat: But these being cast out of him by our Saviour, begg'd to be permitted to enter the Herd of Swine, in Number about 2000, and having obtain'd the desir'd Leave, they hurry'd them into the Sea, where they were all drowned. Things surely as strange and unaccountable are these as any in our modern *Witchcraft*; and therefore, if any will still persist, that it is either *Irrational* or *Impious* to believe *Witches* upon these Accounts, they must say, if they will be true to their own Assertions, that it is equally so, to believe Scripture. But our Author hath another Argument still in Reserve.

Lastly, (says he) The Vanity and Falseness of their Opinion, who believe there are Witches, appears

pears from nothing more than from this, that it ascribes to the Devil an Omnipotent Power; insomuch, that no Rational Man, by the Light of Reason, shall be able to tell, from the History of the Gospel, whether our Saviour himself were a Witch or no. To this I answer, That we who believe Witchcraft, do by no means ascribe to the Devil an Omnipotent Power, or believe any such Thing residing in him, no more than any that read the Scriptures and believe them, think that the Actions perform'd by the Devil, and there recorded, do in the least countenance any such Almightiness. As for our Saviour's being a Witch, his own Answer to the *Pharisees* confutes it; it is well known, and therefore I need not transcribe it, only it is plain that the *Pharisees*, who understood *Moses* as well as the *Sadduces*, did think that Witchcraft was true, that is, that Men might perform very strange Things by the Assistance of the Devil; and it is observable, that our Saviour commanded his Disciples to observe what these *Pharisees* said, tho' not to imitate their Actions. However, our Saviour doth not think fit to argue against this Opinion of theirs, but, granting it true, (and how far this may be urg'd for an Argument on our Side of the Question, I leave the Reader to consider) he proves he could not be such a one, because it was plain he oppos'd the Devil, whom he esteem'd Politican enough not to destroy his own Kingdom. But what were his Miracles, saith our Author, or how were they valued, if malicious Creatures without a Divine Commission enabling them thereto, can make Frogs and Serpents, raise the Dead, give Laws to the VVinds and Seas, to mention no more

of those prodigious works ascrib'd unto the Devil upon the Account of *VVitchcraft*. I own that the Devil can do none of these mighty Things without a Divine Commission; nay, I think I may own, that he never was iempower'd to perform any such; that he never made Frogs or Serpents; rais'd the Dead; or any Works that are truly miraculous; if any such came to pass by the Ministratior of his Agents, it was beside his Purpose and Expectation; thus have I already accounted for the Miracles of the *Magicians*, which were no more the Effect of his Power, than the Prophesies of *Balaam*, or the *Sybils* since, of his Inspiration. So that our Saviour's Miracles can never be pretended, with any Shew of Reason, to be rival'd by the Effects of Witchcraft. And as for the Devil's giving Laws to the Winds and Seas, that neither is his Province: However, when commission'd, no doubt he may perform some strange Things by them; for understanding the Force of Nature beyond any Mortal, he may perform Actions very *wonderful* and *surprizing* to us, which are not therefore present-ly to be deem'd preternatural, since *we* are far from *knowing* the utmost Extent of Nature's Bounds, as I observ'd before upon this adopted-Principle of our Author. But *who* are they, I pray, *whom* he *accuses* of Believing, that the Devil *can command the Influence of the Sun, govern the Motion of the Stars, transform Men and Women into Cats?* &c. If any believe this, I am not of their Mind: But tho' he cannot do this, the last I mean, yet he may influence or possess Cats, Frogs, Serpents, &c. as he once possess'd a Serpent to deceive *Eve*; as he possess'd the *Bodies*

Bodies of Swine, and drove them into the Sea ; as he possess'd the *Bodies* of Men, and govern'd their Organs so, as to render them Dumb ; to make others to speak what he listed : This Scripture gives us an Account of, and why it should be Omnipotence to do it, I cannot see.

Hence our Author proceeds to History and Harangue ; and in Pursuance of this Diabolical Omnipotency, introduces the Decree of the Council of *Ancyra*, which, because he seems to think it to be to the Purpose, I shall consider. He tells us, one *Manes* reviv'd the Opinion of two Principles, first embrac'd by Heathens, *to wit*, of two Gods, of which, one was Good, and the Author of all Good ; and the other, Evil, and the Author of all Evil ; now as the one was Omnipotent to Good, so the other was to Evil. Now our Author seems to imagine, that the Evil Principle and our Devil are the same ; whereas had he consider'd, he might have observ'd, that those that believe the Evil Principle as a God, have quite another Notion of him, than we, from Scripture have of the Devil ; so that what he is upon can be nothing even to his own Purpose. But to go on : Afterwards, it seems one *Priscillian* embrac'd the Opinion of *Manes* ; and the Council of *Ancyra*, esteeming, perhaps, their Evil Principle, our very Devil, and a real Existing Being, made the following Decree against the Opinion, which, as Translated by our Author, runs thus, *If any one believes, that the Devil can Form, or make any Creatures, or that the Infernal Spirit, by the means of his own Power, can create Thunder and Lightning, and Rain, and Drowth, as Priscillian has affirm'd, let him be Excommunicated*

ted and Accursed. To the Truth asserted here, That the Devil cannot do such Things, I willingly subscribe; but perceive not how it affects Witchcraft. Our Author goes on, *Wherefore, if the Devil cannot raise Tempests by his own Sufficiency, he did no more in the Case of Job, than, Elijah, or any mortal Man may do, when he receives a Commission from God.*

Our Author hath chang'd the Terms, the Decree mentions creating Tempests, and he of raising them: What he means by *his own sufficiency* deserves also an Explication: It is possible, God may have given the Devil a Power of raising Tempests by his Formation, or as he made him a Spirit, and yet not have empower'd Man, who is of a different Make, to do the same; so that when Man doth so, it must be by Commission from God, whereas Permission may be sufficient to the Devil to do the same; so that, contrary to the Author's Inference, it appears, *The Doctrine of Witchcraft doth not magnify the Diabolical Power beyond the due Proportion, nor favour of Priscillian, Manes, or the Heathen World, any farther than they embraced a very probable Truth.* Thus, I think, I have prov'd, very plainly, That it is neither *Irrational*, nor *Impious*, to believe Witchcraft. Our Author proceeds, Fifthly, to answer the Arguments of those, that defend Witchcraft: And the first of these, he proposes to answer, is, what no one could well advance in the behalf of Witchcraft; and which I agree with him doth not prove it, to wit, *The Truth of those Accounts we have of strange Things perform'd by invisible Agents, or Spirits; many of which he doth not Contradict, but seems to allow there may be such; and therefore, all I shall observe here is, that he is the first, that I am aware of, to have known, that, allowing the Stories of Apparitions, or Spirits playing mad Tricks among us, hath not acquiesced in the Opinion of the reallity of Witchcraft.*

The next, and first real Argument, he proposes to Answer, is, *That the Persons tormented by Devils, have fallen into their Fits at the Sight, or upon the Touch of suspected Witches, and that they have seen the suspected Witches in this or that place of the Room, when no stander-by else could see any Thing at all, &c.* Why, These Accounts are founded, saith he, partly in the Juggling Delusions of Confederated Impostors, partly in the Errors, or Ridiculous Mistakes of Vulgar Rumours. So that

that such a vast Number of reputed Witches have been put to Death, by means of Impostors accusing People falsely, and because foolish Persons have talk'd *Idely* of these Matters: A very credible Account! But how doth he prove it? Why he begs your pardon for that; if you won't believe him, you may enjoy your own Opinion. Well, but being in a better Humour than ordinary, he will allow some of these Accounts to be really True: And then in this Case, he is pleas'd to let us know, he *sees no Reason whereby to conclude there are such Beings as Witches, but rather, that these Spirits, who are so Frolick and Gamesome in doing Mischief, when they perceive Persons suspected to have set them at work, may on purpose so manage their malicious Tricks, as to confirm the Suspicion, promote the Accusation, procure the Condemnation of those Miserable Wretches, &c.* This is his Account of some of the Phænomenons of Witchcraft. But in Answer to this, I say, It is very improbable, that God would permit the Devil so to deceive Mankind, and impose upon the Publick, to the Condemning of Innocent Persons to Death, by the force of his false Accusations, whereby Mankind could have no defence against him, and consequently this would be more Unaccountable than any thing in Witchcraft can be pretended to be: Human Laws may restrain People from a Commerce with him, or these not prevailing, the offending Persons may yet be brought to condign Punishment: But what Laws, what Punishments, could reach these Malignant Frolicksome Spirits? And what would be stranger still, these Spirits would be able to perswade the suspected Persons themselves, that, tho' they knew themselves wholly Innocent they were really concern'd in bewitching the Distemper'd Person, that they employ'd these Dæmons, that they had a long Commerce and Confederacy with them; this I say would be more unaccountable than all the Appearances that have attended Witchcraft. However, I am glad the Author hath allow'd thus much, and own'd the Possibility of the Devils tormenting Persons in this manner, for thereby he hath most evidently overthrown what he before advanc'd, of the Irrationality and Impiety of believing Witchcraft so that all must pass for *non scriptum*, as if there was no such thing said, and that part of his Title ought to be eras'd which promises such a Proof.

The Argument, he next answers, is, Peoples falling ill, upon the Threatning or Curseing of the Person afterwards Suspected. The Substance of what he says to this, is, that it is no certain Proof. I grant it is not of its self; but joyn'd with other Circumstances is very considerable. To see a Man come out of a House with his Sword and Hands all Bloody, is no Proof of a Murder committed, but if it should be afterwards found, that a Man was just then kill'd in the House and his deaths Wound found to be made with a Sword, and if it were farther known, that this Person had born a Grudge against the Deceas'd, I suppose no one would question, but this Man was the Murderer. This way of Arguing is therefore more Fallacy, and the Force of it consists in this; this Part is not the whole, therefore all the Parts united are not the whole, as if we should Argue, that the Body is not the whole Man, therefore the Body and Soul is not the whole Man.

The next and last Argument he proposes to Answer, is, the Confession of Witches themselves. To this he People by Tortures have been brought to confess any says, thing, their Tormenters have desired; and that this is the Case of *Witches*. To which I answer, some have indeed been urg'd by exquisite Tortures to Confess Crimes, they have not been Guilty of, as thinking it more preferable to suffer the Punishment of a Crime they never committed, than by the Continuance of Life at the Expence of undergoing insufferable Pain: but is this, or was it ever the Case of *Witches* among us? If any know such, I freely leave them to lay as little stress upon the Confession of such People, as they please. But what will our Author say to the Confessions of such, who being under the Sentence of Death, which the acknowledgment of their Crimes could neither be suppos'd to retard or hasten? And of such there are many Instances to be met with. Now, tho' we may Suspect the Truth of a Malefactor, who afferts his Innocence to the Last Moment; yet surely never any question'd the Truth of a Criminal's Confession, who own'd his Crimes and the Justice of his Condemnation in this Season. Our Author seems to have been a ware of the Weakness of this Answer, and therefore endeavours to Corroborate it, with a quite different account, to wit, *That he is not to doubt but some Poor Silly, Melancholy, old Wretches have really believ'd themselves Witches, and to be Guilty of*

of those Actions, which not only their Foolish Neighbours, but Men that are called Worshipful have charged them with. He tells us, *The Effects of Melancholy are very strange, especially if heightened by Poverty or want of good Diet, by Ignorance, Solitariness, and old Age*: Such People take their very Dreams to be real Visions and Truths. Want of knowledge in the Art of Physick makes Men attribute meer Natural Distempers to Spirits; nay, Physicians themselves are in the Dark as to the abstruser Distempers of Human Bodies, especially such as arise from Melancholly. To which I answer, that these Witches generally are no such Melancholy Persons, as our Author would represent them; they appear lively and bold; presuming upon their Power of doing Mischief; they threaten upon all Occasions, and keep the Neighbourhood in fear of them, where they are; and give People reason to suspect them very early, from the Intemperance of their Passion: So that our Author's fine discourse on Melancholly, is nothing at all to the Purpose. Besides, it is very strange to me that two Melancholy Persons should so happily jump together in their Fancies, without any intercourse with one another, as that the one should positively, even out of the Fits, Confirm, that she owes her Pains to such a Witch; and the Person so accus'd, should own she did thus procure her Opinion, by means of a Familiar taking her shape, to be thus Tormented, and yet all this to be meer Imagination. This indeed would be something more wonderful, than even *Witchcraft* it self ever furnish'd forth. As for the Physicians Ignorance in diseases arising from Melancholy, surely that Art hath not been cultivated so long, by as Sagacious Wits, as ever the World Produc'd, for them to be Ignorant whether a Distemper be Natural, or the Effect of Diabolical Power. Distempers wholly unaccountable, Appearances which plainly discover an Invisible Agent, are easily distinguishable sure from those effects, which the Nature of Human Bodies is capable of Producing. And such Instances have been so Numerous, and so Incontestably evidenc'd as must convince any, who have not resolv'd to shut their Eyes against the Brightest Light, and harden their Hearts against the most evident Reason.

Our Author goes on, Sixthly, to shew by what means this Opinion of Witchcraft came into the World; but what he says on this head, being all precarious, founded on unprov'd Suppositions; and I having shew'd, that our Opinion is founded on the unerring Truth of Scripture, and the Continuance of it being supported by Innumerable matters of Facts among Christians, this I shall suppose a Sufficient Answer to what he says on this Head, and I supposing I have made good the Title of my Book, I here, with him, dismiss my Reader.

F I N I S.

